

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The final Office Action dated September 7, 2005 and the Advisory Action dated December 6, 2005 have been received and their contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1 and 17 are hereby amended. Claims 1-32 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,043,511 to Kim (hereinafter "Kim") in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0117691 to Choi et al. (hereinafter "Choi").

The rejection of claims 1-32 as being unpatentable over Kim in view of Choi is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Independent claims 1 and 17 are allowable over Kim in view of Choi in that the claims each recite a combination of elements including, for example, "wherein the first barrier metal layer and the first copper layer have a smooth taper shape without any steps on their sides." None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least these features of the claimed invention. Both Kim and Choi are silent with respect to at least these features of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, claims 2-16 which depend therefrom, claim 17, and claims 18-32 which depend therefrom, are allowable over Kim in view of Choi.

Applicants believe the foregoing remarks place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: January 5, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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